

Dear DPH Appropriations Committee:

As a taxpayer living in Branford, I understand the need to balance a budget.

You will have to decide how to spend our dollars.

I can tell you that our dollars are well spent in a school health center.

I would just like to give you four examples of what we do, two of which occurred in my office today: a 17 year old Junior seeking birth control to avoid an unplanned pregnancy began to talk about her slipping school grades, her deep sadness about a past loss, her use of alcohol to treat her sadness, and her desire to get help, but fear of stigma and a sense that she "should be happy" were barriers to treatment. She revealed past suicidal thoughts and plans. Currently without such ideation she will now be getting clinical social work counseling in our School Based Health Center.

Another example: an angry, isolated boy with violent thoughts has been supported with counseling, psychiatry, and is now staying after school working with other students on environmental projects. He is now socializing well with other students and you can see him smiling and talking with his friends.

Third example: 16 year old boy with abdominal pain, likely appendicitis, whose parents were going to wait til the end of their work day to take pt to Emergency room. A phone call with the parent's boss explaining the situation resulting in the boy getting to the ED in time for an appendectomy without rupture (a cost savings and less potential problems in the future for this boy).

Fourth: 16 year old girl whose sexual partner advised her to get checked. She thinks she recalls he said gonorrhea.

On exam, pt had genital lesions consistent with genital herpes.

Through the DPH STD program, the patient received antiviral medication, was treated for Gonorrhea in the office, and a case of PID (costly hospitalization) was potentially avoided.

There are countless examples of school children and teens treated for asthma exacerbations in the school clinic office, thus avoiding a trip to the ED (cost savings and prompt comfortable care for the patient).

Please reconsider the future cuts to School Health Centers. The care we provide saves us money!

Sincerely,

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